

Amendments to the Claims:

- Claims 1-15 Cancelled
- Claim 16 (Currently Amended) A chemically synthesized double stranded nucleic acid molecule comprising:
- (a) nucleotide sequence having between 14 and 24 nucleotides complementary to nucleotide sequence of a target RNA or a portion thereof and having perfect complementarity between each strand of said double stranded nucleic acid molecule;
 - (b) a 5'-cap, a 3'-cap, or both a 5' and 3'-cap on one of the strands of the double stranded nucleic acid molecule; and
 - (c) a mixture of modified nucleotides and unmodified nucleotides, wherein the modified nucleotides are 2'-fluoro, 2'-O-methyl, 2'H or a combination thereof and the unmodified nucleotides are ribonucleotides.
- Claim 17 (Previously Presented) The double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 16, wherein said cap comprises an inverted nucleotide.
- Claim 18 (Previously Presented) The double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 17, wherein said inverted nucleotide comprises an inverted deoxynucleotide.
- Claim 19 (Previously Presented) The double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 16, wherein said cap comprises an inverted abasic moiety.
- Claim 20 (Previously Presented) The double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 19, wherein said inverted abasic moiety comprises an inverted deoxyabasic moiety.

- Claim 21 (Previously Presented) The double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 16, wherein said nucleic acid comprises one or more phosphorothioate internucleotide linkages.
- Claim 22 (Previously Presented) The double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 16, wherein said target RNA is encoded by a mammalian gene.
- Claim 23 (Previously Presented) The double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 16, wherein said target RNA is viral RNA.
- Claim 24 (Previously Presented) A composition comprising the double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 16 in a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or diluent.